James reveals the perversions to which human nature is exposed in the exciting but sultry world of the feminist movement. Describing Basil's impressions of Olive Chancellor, James observes, "what Basil Ranscm actually perceived was that Miss Chancellor was a signal old maid. That was her quality, her destiny, nothing could be more distinctly written... She was a spinster as Shelley was a lyric-poet or as the month of August is sultry."[2] James compares a meeting of Olive's sisterhood to ^ rendezvous of witches on the Brocken. The* leaders of the movement are haters of men, and are totally devoid of feminine grace and charm. The good heroines of James are trouble-shooters, to whom contention and unpleasantness are anathema. But, to Olive Chancellor, contention is most welcome. She meddles with the life of Verena, for she suffers from the saviour complex; "1 want to enter the lives of women who are lonely, who are piteous, 1 want to be near to them to help them."[3] Like the governess in *The Turn of the Screw*. Olive Chancellor is morally deluded, in as much as she is unable to discriminate between what is natural and good and what is unnatural and evil.

Moral delusion is a source of evil, and the impact of this evil is felt In all its full force by Verena, who is for a time deluded into renouncing her true nature. Verena realises the spiritual domination exercised by Olive over herself. "The fine web of authority, of dependence, that her strenuous companion had woven about her was now as dense as a suit of golden mail."[4] She feels "Olive's grasp too ^clinching, too terrible."[5] Forces, to which her feminine nature res-ponds readily, pull Verena towards Basil whom she loves. "She was in love - she felt it in every throb of her being."* To be true to her nature, Verena has to flee from Olive, the arch-champion of the feminist movement. The restrictive excluslveness of reform renders every generous act a partial good and hence inactive to the point of .being an evil meddling with the free processes of nature,

Mrs. Farrinder, the great apostle of the emancipation of women,
lectures on- temperance and the rights of women, and her goals are
"tar give the ballot to every woman in the country and'to take the
i lowing bowl from every man."[7] Even the good-old Miss Birdseye, in
whom the New England humanitarianism still survives, sometimes
wished 'the blacks back in bondage' for the sake of excitement.
-James seems to say that the reformers are miore-' interested, though
unwittingly, in vulgar excitement than in the women's x?ause^